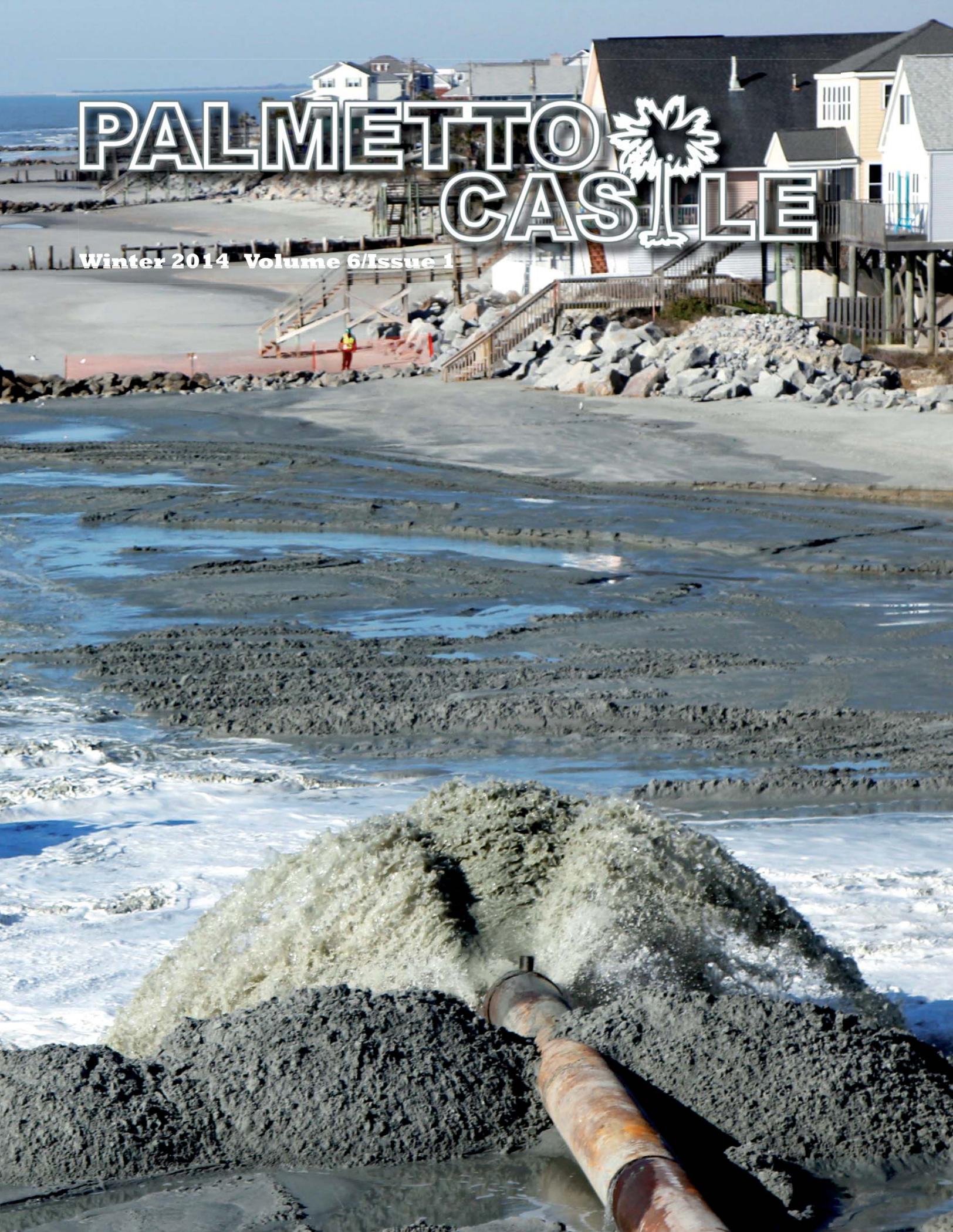


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Winter 2014 Volume 6/Issue 1



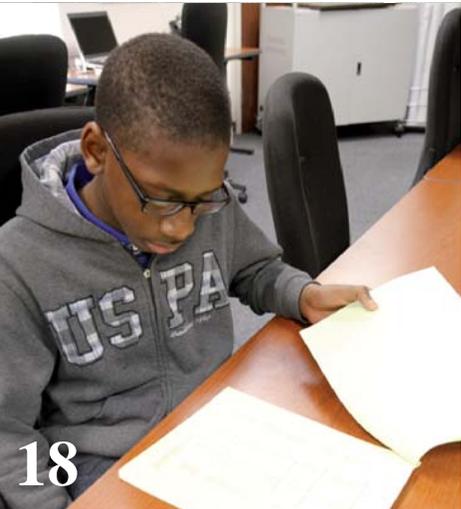
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Cover photo by Sara Corbett
The Folly Beach shoreline protection project is coming along well with sand pumping daily. For more information on the project please see pages 10 and 12.

The Palmetto Castle is a quarterly unofficial publication authorized under the provisions of AR 360-1 under supervision of the Corporate Communications Office. Editorial views and opinions expressed are not necessarily those of the Corps of Engineers or the Department of Defense. Inquiries, comments and requests for electronic copies can be forwarded to the editor of the Palmetto Castle by e-mail to :
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From the Commander

Greetings from Charleston!

The New Year is well under way and the Charleston District is already hard at work with our customers, stakeholders and partners. The outlook across 2014 has improved with the enactment of the omnibus funding bill. The District has a full portfolio of programs to execute, including military construction, civil works, and interagency support. The District's regulatory division continues to see a record number of permit applications, including several from large businesses, which usually indicates increased economic activity in South Carolina.

We have already awarded more than 160 contracts this fiscal year and the Charleston District stands trained and resourced to meet the challenges we have today and in the future. It is with optimism that I look forward to continuing to serve you and contribute to the success of your missions.

Our Folly Beach Shore Protection Project began in January and is in full swing. We are excited to be placing 1.5 million cubic yards of sand on the beach in order to protect the property and infrastructure behind it. This is a unique opportunity to see this type of construction, so as the days turn warmer and we move into spring, take a ride out to this beautiful beach and see us at work. You might even find an unusual shell.

This year we are set to achieve two major milestones for the Charleston Harbor Post-45 Deepening study. The draft feasibility study and the draft environmental impact statement will be released late summer or early fall. Review and coordination will then be conducted with our partner agencies for environmental compliance. The effort put into this study by the Corps and our cost-share sponsor, the South Carolina State Ports Authority, and state and local resource agencies has been tremendous. We are looking forward to determining the best alternative to include the future project depth and width. We are still on track to complete the final Chief's Report by September 2015, followed by the design phase. The level of expertise, coordination and cooperation demonstrated by all agencies has set this project study on the path to success.

The District recently completed our annual customer visits in order to review our past year's performance and discuss future requirements. We visited with customers not only in Charleston and South Carolina, but also those who span the country. It is a privilege to provide services and support for such a broad range of customers and it is especially gratifying to know that all of our customers' missions and projects ultimately make our country better. We are currently conducting our annual civil works customer satisfaction surveys and I look forward to receiving feedback from you on how we can improve the services we provide.



I am proud to announce that Lisa Metheney is now the Deputy District Engineer for Project Management, which is the senior civilian position in the District. Lisa has served in the Charleston District for the last decade as the Assistant Chief for Programs and Project Management. Lisa succeeds Bill Stein, who retired on January 3rd after an incredible 39 year career with the Corps. The Corps is a better organization thanks to Bill and the District is in good hands with Lisa taking his place.

Despite the continuing drawdown in Overseas Contingency Operations, the Charleston District continues to support the effort with four civilians currently deployed. The District has consistently contributed a very high number of volunteers to our country's efforts in Afghanistan and Iraq since 2003. I could not be more proud of the selfless service the District continues to display.

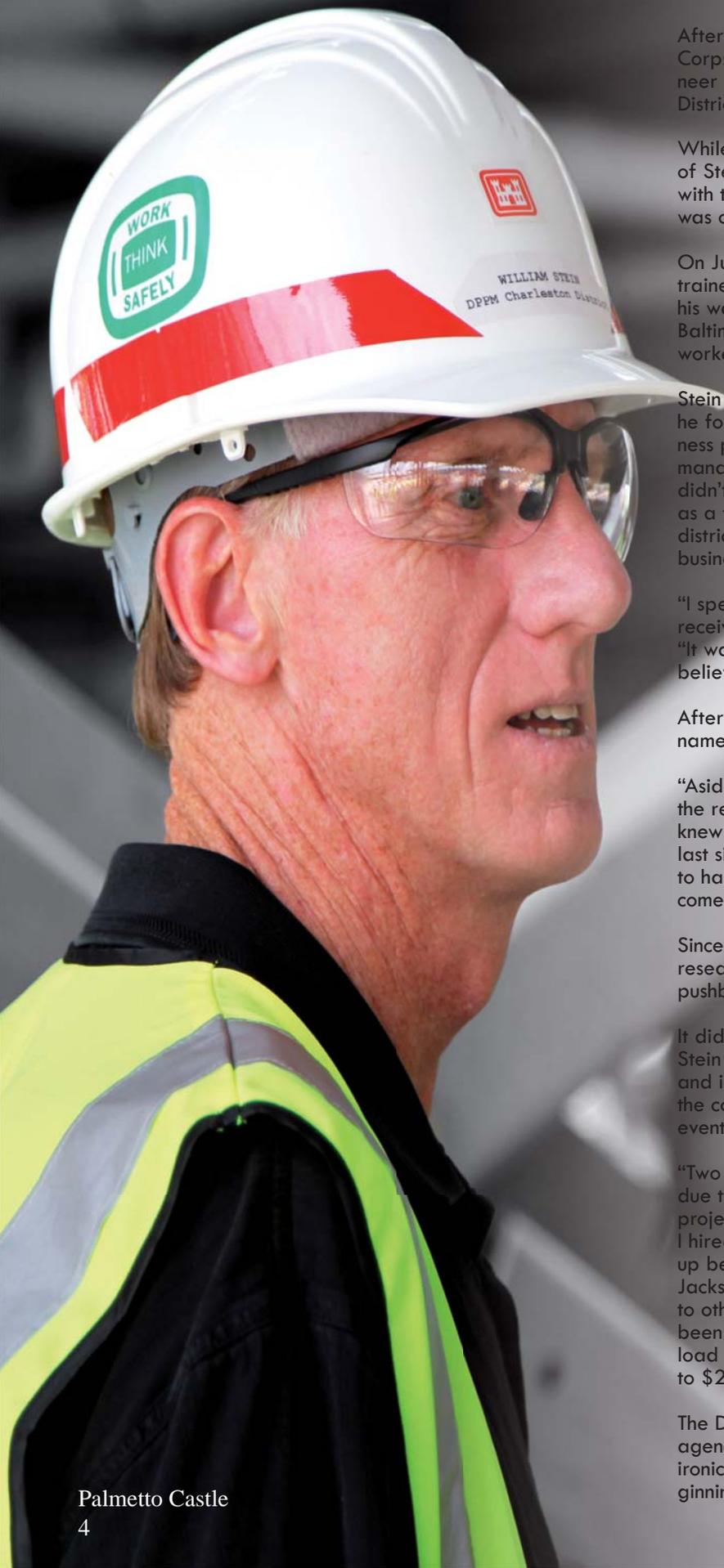
Thank you for giving the Charleston District the opportunity to work with you, the citizens of South Carolina and our customers and partners across the nation. I look forward to a productive year in 2014 as we move forward together.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "J. T. Litz".

John T. Litz, PMP
Lt. Col., U.S. Army
Commander and District Engineer
John.T.Litz@usace.army.mil

Looking Back...

Article and photos by Sara Corbett



*"You can let things happen, make things happen, or wonder what happened."
-Unknown*

After 39.5 years of making things happen with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Bill Stein retired as Deputy District Engineer for Programs and Project Management of the Charleston District.

While a senior studying engineering at Bucknell University, one of Stein's professors encouraged him to apply for a position with the Baltimore District as a trainee. Stein interviewed and was offered the job before he even graduated from college.

On July 22, 1974, Stein started his civil service career as a trainee with the structural design team, but he quickly worked his way up to a structural engineer. After three years with the Baltimore District, he moved to the Savannah District where he worked on projects at Moody Air Force Base and Fort Stewart.

Stein landed in the South Atlantic Division in Atlanta, where he found, and spent 20 years working on, his passion: business process. While serving as the acting chief of the project management branch, he realized that the districts he oversaw didn't talk to each other, much less work together. Seeing this as a flaw in the system, he started a "regional village" for districts to come together, collaborate and streamline their business practices.

"I spent six years working on this concept, but I continually received resistance and pushback from the districts," said Stein. "It was difficult to handle, but I trudged ahead because I truly believed this process would help the Corps grow."

After several attempts at a promotion at SAD, Stein threw his name in the hat for the DDPM position in the Charleston District.

"Aside from the several interviews, I had been passed over for the regional business position at SAD, which was a position I knew I would be great at, since it was what I had done for the last six years," said Stein. "But it ended up being the best thing to happen to me. If I had gotten the job, I would never have come to the Charleston District and I have loved my time here."

Since he was now the head civilian, he could take his years of research and ideas and finally put them into practice with no pushback.

It didn't take Stein long to put his plans into action. In 2006, Stein hired Lauri Newkirk-Paggi to lead the contracting team, and in 2008 the Savannah District gave the Charleston District the construction projects at Fort Jackson; these two coinciding events led to the "perfect storm."

"Two of Lauri's former co-workers were about to lose their jobs due to base realignment and closure," Stein said. "They were project managers for the U.S. Marine Force Reserves. So when I hired them, it brought MARFORRES on as customers. It ended up being the best thing we could have ever done. With Fort Jackson and MARFORRES as customers, we were able to go to other agencies and showcase our work. Since then we have been hired by nearly 20 other federal agencies and our workload has grown from \$60 million a year and 118 employees to \$260 million a year and 231 employees."

The District continued to grow due to Stein's outreach to other agencies and soon other districts started asking him for advice, ironically, it was the same districts that pushed back in the beginning, and Stein was more than happy to help them.

...Looking Forward

“Bill has excellent foresight and the ability to strategically plan,” said Lt. Col. John Litz, District Commander. “We are incredibly fortunate to have had his guidance and leadership for as long as we did.”

Stein had finally accomplished what he had set out to start; it was time to retire.

“My ideas are well established within the Charleston District and are catching on in the other districts,” said Stein. “My work is complete. And I am ready to spend my days on the golf course, not in meetings.”

With Stein’s retirement came a vacancy to fill. A vacancy that was a perfect fit for Lisa Metheney, who has more than 20 years experience with the Corps, 14 of those with the Charleston District, as the deputy assistant chief, programs and project management for Stein. As deputy, she was able to step right into the role of DDPM without missing a beat.

“It was a tough choice with a high level of competition, but Lisa was the best fit for the District,” said Litz. “It has been a very smooth transition, which is exactly what I expected.”

Metheney started with the Huntington District in 1993 as a co-op student; she worked part time in the Corps planning division while obtaining her master’s in business administration from Marshall University. Upon graduation, Metheney was hired full-time as an economist by the Huntington District. After six years there she decided to head to warmer climates as an economist with the Charleston District.

During her past 20 years with the Corps, Metheney has worn a variety of different hats including project manager in the Europe District, public affairs officer in the Charleston District, and volunteered to deploy on disaster relief missions. As the deputy, Metheney took on exciting projects such as the Charleston Harbor Post 45 deepening project and several shoreline protection projects.

“I love to learn, so I took every opportunity I could to take on different positions and projects so I could learn everything there was to know about the Corps and the Corps’ process,” said Metheney. “The more I learned, the more I loved working for the Corps.”

And learning is exactly what Metheney has done, so much so that she is the “unofficial-expert-on-everything-related-to-the-Corps” at the Charleston District and most division chiefs ask her for input on their projects. She has also taken on the responsibility of mentoring to several District employees; she offers them career advice and guidance and always makes herself available to them.

“We are extremely lucky to have Lisa on our team,” said Litz. “I know that when I am with Lisa, we can handle any situation. She will have the answer or a viable solution.”

But Metheney will be the first to tell you she couldn’t have gotten where she is today without having some great mentors during her career and her list of mentors is diverse and lengthy due to all of her experiences.

“She is so eager and such a quick study, it has made mentoring her easy,” said Stein. “I couldn’t be more thrilled that she is the new DDPM. She will do a fantastic job leading the District.”

Happy golfing, Bill, and congratulations, Lisa!



Conveying Containers

Article and photos by Sean McBride

A crowd of nearly 200 people packed into the Chicora School of Communications in North Charleston, S.C., to hear about Palmetto Railways' proposal to develop a 90-acre Intermodal Container Transfer Facility at the former Charleston Navy Base and make improvements to existing rail lines and local roadways.

The gathering was a public scoping meeting to present preliminary information about the proposed project, solicit comments from residents, and provide information about the Environmental Impact Statement that is being prepared by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Charleston District to evaluate the proposed project.

Residents were given the opportunity to attend an open house before the meeting where they could look at displays about the proposed project. Representatives of the Charleston District and Palmetto Railways were on-hand during this time to talk one-on-one with residents and try to answer their questions.

After the open house, Lt. Col. John Litz, district commander, addressed the crowd and Nat Ball, regulatory project manager, discussed the Corps' role and responsibilities during the preparation of the EIS. According to Ball, the District will spend about one year studying potential impacts to the human and natural environment, such as wetlands, air quality, traffic and noise.

"We need your help to identify potential impacts and specific concerns within your community," said Ball to attendees. "Public participation is essential to the regulatory process."

Aside from questions about environmental impacts, attendees like local small business owners were concerned about how access to their businesses would be affected by additional trains and what economic benefits may be generated as a result. Others were concerned about noise and health issues and asked for updates throughout the process.

"We anticipate that a draft EIS will be released for public review and a public hearing will be held in the fall or winter of 2014," said Ball. "Agency and public comments that are submitted in response to the draft EIS will be addressed in a final EIS that will be released sometime in 2015."

One source of confusion for many people was why a study was being done when a study had already been completed. The District prepared an EIS and issued a Department of the Army permits for a new port facility and port access road at the southern end of the former Charleston Navy Base in 2007. The new study will look at potential impacts associated with the ICTF and will also update many of the studies that were conducted in 2007 in order to address cumulative impacts associated with the whole proposed project.

For additional information about the proposed Navy Base ICTF project, visit www.navybaseictf.com.



Opposite: Lt. Col. John Litz addresses the crowd
 Right: Nat Ball explains the NEPA process
 Bottom Left: A crowd wanders through the different stations
 Bottom Left: Containers like these would be transported via the railway
 Bottom Right: This map shows the entire project



“Public participation is essential to the regulatory process.”- Nat Ball



Tipping Our CAP

Article by Sean McBride
Photos by Dudley Patrick

You never know where new projects might come from at the Charleston District. Usually, they come from referrals or from customers that the District has worked with in the past. Those projects are typically larger in scale, but there is no limit to the size project the District is capable of completing. That's why when Dudley Patrick, project manager, stumbled upon an article in a local newspaper about the problems in Polk Swamp, near St. George, Dorchester County, S.C., he immediately began thinking.

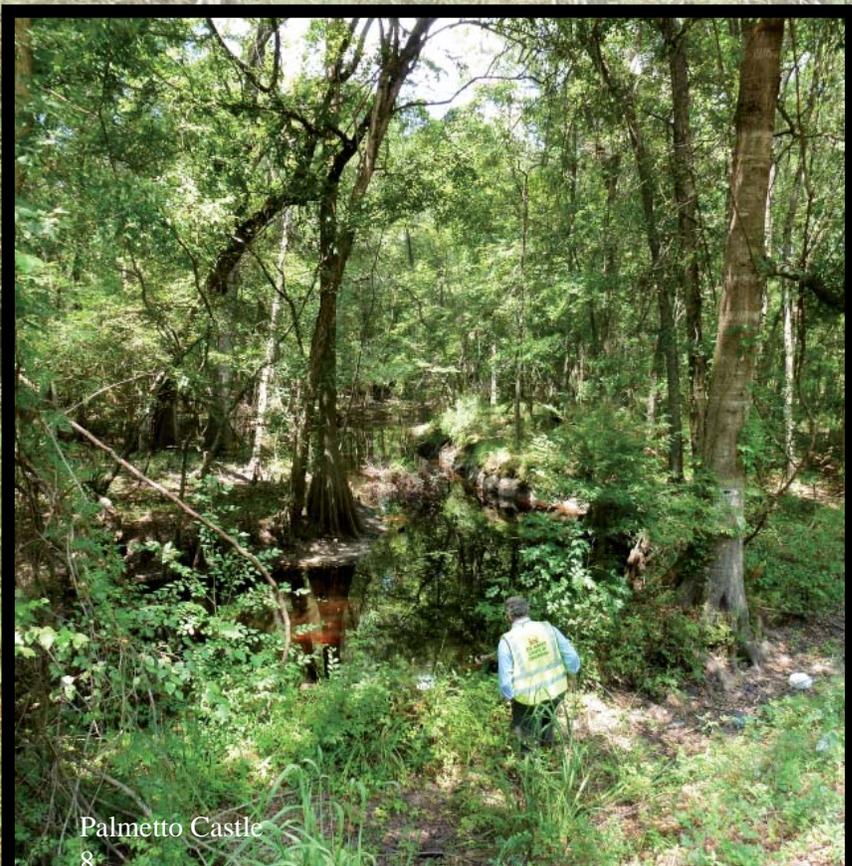
"I read the article in the paper and thought the problems at Polk Swamp sounded a lot like what we did at Pocolaligo Swamp in 2008," said Patrick. "It seemed like there was a sufficient possibility for a federal project so we discussed the idea with leadership in Dorchester County."

Patrick and a member of the Charleston District's planning and environmental branch met with Dorchester County leaders and conducted a visit at Polk Swamp in December 2010 to see what opportunities there might

be for a potential project. The meeting and visit went well and showed a lot of promise for something to be done. Due to the small size and nature of the project, it could be performed under the Continuing Authorities Program.

The Continuing Authorities Program allows the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to complete smaller projects, often to help smaller municipalities, without needing to get specific congressional authorization for each project. The CAP project for Polk Swamp falls under Section 206 (Aquatic Ecosystem Restoration category) of the Water Resources Development Act of 1996, which aims to restore degraded aquatic ecosystems and benefit aquatic habitats.

CAP projects are like any other USACE civil works project in that they require a feasibility study to determine what the project would be and if it is a beneficial use of government funds to construct a project. The benefit to small municipalities is that the first \$100,000 of a CAP feasibility study is funded fully by the federal government. If a study extends beyond that, the work



Palmetto Castle



to Polk Swamp

is equally cost-shared between the government and the non-federal sponsor. If a project is approved and funded for construction, the cost-share changes to 65 percent for the federal government and 35 percent for the sponsor.

In the case of Polk Swamp, the non-federal sponsor is Dorchester County, who filed a letter of intent to have the Charleston District conduct a feasibility study in 2010. Due to funding constraints, no new CAP projects were being funded by USACE at that time, but when funds became available in 2013, many projects vied for the limited funds.

“Polk Swamp competed well for funding because we had a good idea what the federal interest benefits could be,” said Patrick. “We had already done our site investigation report from our initial visit, so we had an idea of what we wanted to do for the project and many other competing projects didn’t have that yet.”

Now, the Charleston District is in the initial phases of the feasibility study for Polk Swamp. The goal of the

project will be to restart the natural process in the ecosystem. The streams are extremely overrun with fallen trees, invasive grasses and weeds, and obstructed channel beds. This will involve using machinery to clear the streams to reestablish the natural contours and flows. This will eliminate stagnant water and help revitalize surrounding trees and wildlife.

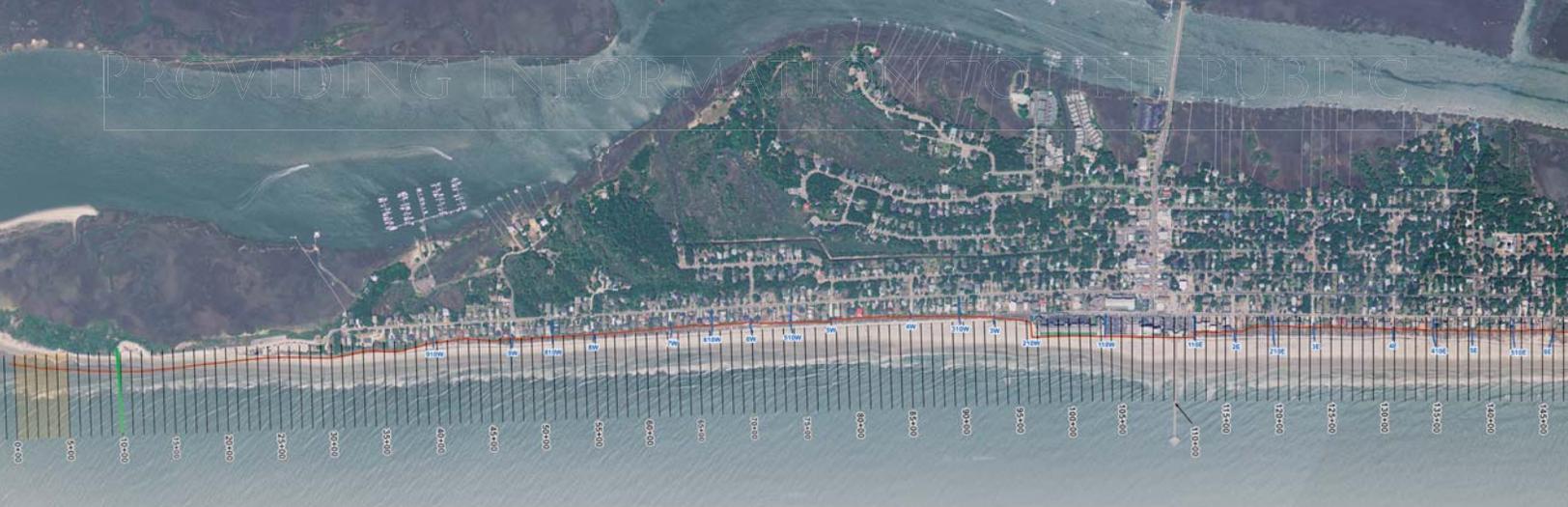
“Polk Swamp makes significant contributions to bottomland hardwoods, like gum and cypress trees, and other disappearing species in the South,” said Patrick. “We’re hoping to have the feasibility study done by the end of 2014 so that we can get started in this ecosystem restoration effort when funding becomes available.”

Left: Patrick inspects conditions in Polk Swamp.

Center: Invasive vegetation clog streams in Polk Swamp, making water flow nearly impossible.

Right: Dams and fallen trees are obstructing the water flow.





Public Workshop at Folly Beach

Article by Sean McBride
 Photos by Sara Corbett

On a picturesque day at Folly Beach, the Charleston District held a series of events for the Folly Beach Shore Protection Project. Each event targeted a different group of people in order to provide detailed information about a project that will directly affect thousands of residents, visitors and tourists for the next decade.

The shore protection project is being done as part of a 50 year agreement with the City of Folly Beach to place sand back onto the beach approximately every eight years due to the change in sediment flow caused by the construction of jetties in Charleston Harbor in 1895. This project will consist of placing approximately 1.5 million cubic yards of sand onto 5.34 miles of beach.

In an effort to be as transparent as possible, the District began the day with a stakeholders reception, which included key partners from various projects and local, state and federal agencies that the District works with.

“Each of our stakeholders and partners is an important piece of our program, so we aim to keep them as involved as we can,” said Lt. Col. John Litz, district commander. “We work closely with them in every project we do to implement innovative engineering solutions to improve and strengthen the nation.”

District personnel had set up several stations in a conference room at a local hotel to showcase various aspects of the project. One of these was an interactive display of geographic information systems software that shows where exactly on the beach the construction crew is working at any given time. This is linked to a public website where the public can keep an eye on where the construction is. There was also a display discussing the engineering aspects of the project, with diagrams and a sample of the sand that has been pumped onto the beach. Another display featured how the District will keep an eye out for the endangered loggerhead turtle when nesting season begins and turtles make their way to the dunes to lay eggs.

These displays were a huge hit when students from the Charleston Charter School for Math and Science came to visit later in the morning. Inviting these students was part of the District’s STEM (science, technology, engineering and math) outreach for National Engineers Week. The students were also able to go out to the project site on the beach and see the construction firsthand.*

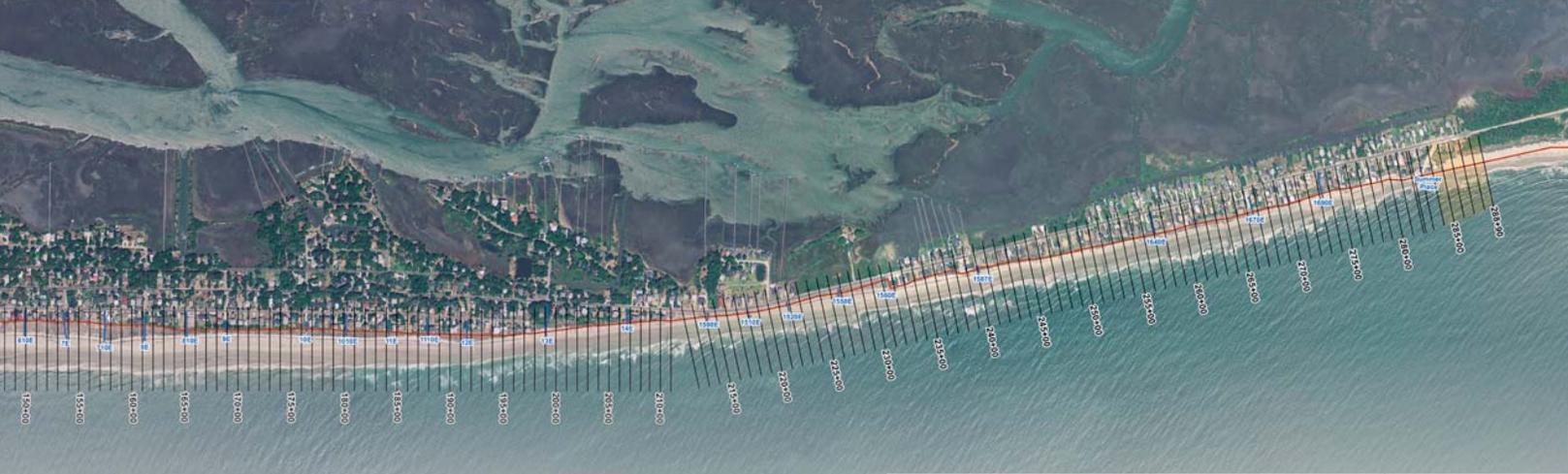
In the late afternoon, a public workshop was held, at the same location, for members of the public to come learn about the project and ask questions. District personnel entertained questions at their displays for more than two hours about all aspects of the project.

“It was great to see the public wanting to be so involved in the project,” said Wes Wilson, interim project manager. “They were very interested in how the project was designed and how they can keep up with its progress. We were happy to talk with everyone and help them understand as much as possible since this has a direct effect on them.”

Pre- and post-surveys were conducted at the public workshop in an attempt to gauge attendees’ knowledge of the project before and after looking at displays and talking with District personnel. The surveys each asked basic, yet major, questions about the project as well as questions in the pre-survey about how they had heard about the event and questions in the post-survey about their feelings toward how the meeting improved their knowledge of the project. Based on the results, it is clear that the public workshop achieved the goal of increasing the public’s knowledge on the project.

Respondents indicated that they felt their knowledge was improved and the correct answer response rate to the basic project questions went up. The survey results show that public workshops are good for increasing knowledge of projects and our transparency.

**You can read more about the visit from Charleston Charter in the upcoming special STEM edition of the Palmetto Castle*



Top: A photo of Folly Beach and the project
 Middle: Alan Shirey, biologist, educates the students about turtle nesting
 Right: Tom Scruggs, City of Folly Beach Council Member, points to the map while conversing about the project
 Bottom: Mayor Tim Goodwin thanks the Corps for its dedication to the project





Photos taken by Sara Corbett and Sean McBride

Top: The CRAB stands in the surf behind several pipes.

Middle: A small crab makes its way back into the ocean.

Bottom: Hanna Collins, civil engineer, collects samples of sand. In the background is the pipe that ejects the sand.

Top right: A bulldozer pushes sand towards the dunes.

Bottom right: The dredge, Alaska, is used to scour the sand in the ocean which is used to renourish the beach.

Constructing Folly Beach

By Sara Corbett

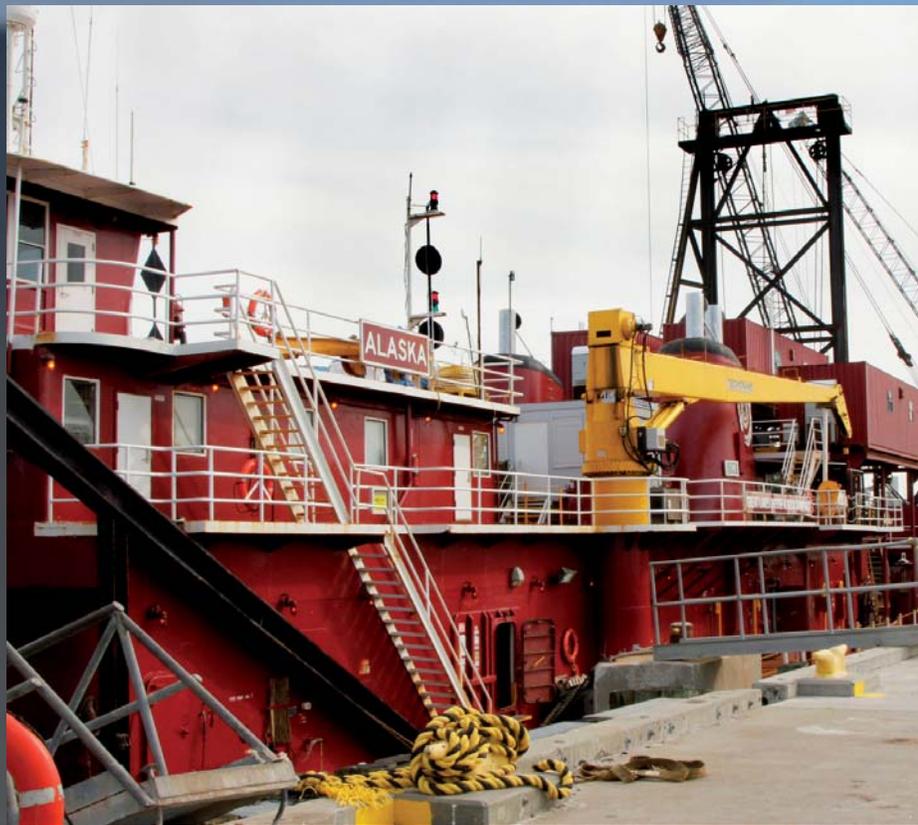
There is a new type of CRAB on Folly Beach, but unlike the other crabs that reside there, this one will be gone by summer.

The Coastal Research Amphibious Buggy first came to Great Lakes Dredging and Dock, the contractor for the project, in the early 1980's. Once it was established as a safe, efficient platform for surveying the surf zone on beach renourishment projects, GLDD designed and ordered two more CRABs to add to their fleet. These CRABs are the only ones of their kind as GLDD has exclusive rights to the design. Gathering data on the beach can be tricky due to waves, currents and weather, but those factors have no effect on the CRAB as the operator stays dry and safe in the platform. The GPS on the CRAB is fully automated and enhances data gathering efficiency, improves the quality of the data gathered and adds reliability to customer reports.

"The CRAB is a unique three-wheeled vehicle that has a calibrated GPS on board which collects topographic surveys from the dune out into the surf" said Caleb Brewer, GIS analyst. "This ensures that the correct amount of sand is being placed throughout the renourishment."

Since safety is a number one priority to the Corps and GLDD, the units are fully equipped with a permanent hydraulic piping, a weatherproof radio, skid proof flooring, a fire extinguisher and a multitude of recovery equipment.

While there are several other pieces of equipment used to ensure that the beach is properly renourished, such as a bulldozer, a backhoe, a front end loader to move the several miles of pipes, and a dredge that is three miles out to sea, the CRAB is by far the most unusual.



BEWARE OF THE UNUSUAL



Article by David Warren
Photo by Sara Corbett

An unusual creature is in Shem Creek—it's green and orange, it's loud, belches smoke and has a five mile long tail. No, it is not a prehistoric sea creature, just the sixteen inch diameter cutter head dredge *Richmond* doing its job for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Charleston District. The dredge *Richmond* is 130 feet long, 28 feet wide and has more than 2,000 horsepower of pump and generators installed.

Shem Creek is part of the overall Charleston Harbor project. The Shem Creek portion of the project starts at the end of Sullivan's Island and runs through Mount Pleasant Channel and makes a right turn into Shem Creek at Haddrells Point and ends at the Coleman Boulevard bridge. The channel is 90 feet wide and dredged to 12 feet deep.

Shem Creek is one of the most popular recreational and commercial boating spots in Charleston, so why dredge it?

Shem Creek supports the last commercial shrimp and fishing fleets in Charleston Harbor, and, right now, fleets could only get safely out of the creek at high tide. With a freshly dredged creek, the shrimp trawlers and fishing vessels will once again be able to safely enter and leave at all tides.

This dredging comes at the perfect time. With the shrimping industry at an all time low and on the verge of extinction due to several years of severe weather, the hurdle of having to wait for high tide to enter and exit the creek has been eliminated. Should this industry disappear, it would have disastrous effects on the small fishing and shrimping community that surrounds the creek; most of its members have spent their entire lives shrimping. Once the dredging is complete, shrimpers and fishermen will be free to come and go as they need, which will help them

Palmetto Castle

SUAL SEA CREATURE



keep their businesses afloat.

The ground work for construction of this project began in 2013 with the preparation of the disposal area at Morris Island. The disposal area was thoroughly cleaned and the dikes repaired to accept dredged material from both Shem Creek and the anchorage basin in Charleston Harbor. The District anticipates removing approximately 160,000 cubic yards of dredged material from Shem Creek and 400,000 CY of dredged material from the anchorage.

Life in Shem Creek has dramatically changed since it was last dredged in 2005. In the last 10 years, daily activity in the creek has increased ten-fold. Kayaks, paddle boards and recreational boaters are visible everyday and since safety is the District's number one priority, a public awareness campaign was started in December by disseminating fliers to businesses

and homes along the creek. The District also did several media interviews, ran newspaper ads and briefed Mount Pleasant town council on the project.

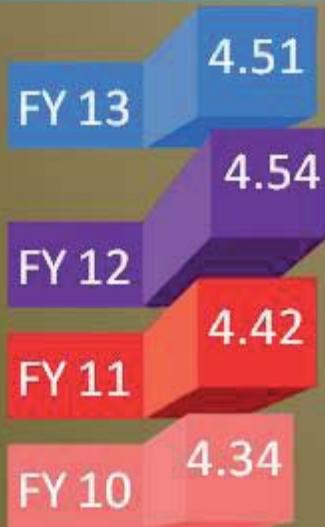
"This is a precision dredging project that requires a lot of public cooperation to ensure that vessels are not in the way of the dredge because there is so little room to maneuver with the channel being so narrow," said Lisa Metheny, Deputy District Engineer for Programs and Project Management.

Soon the green and orange machine with the five mile long tail will slowly back its way out of the creek leaving it in better shape than it found it and disappear out into the harbor to begin the second part of the journey to the anchorage, which was last dredged in 1993.

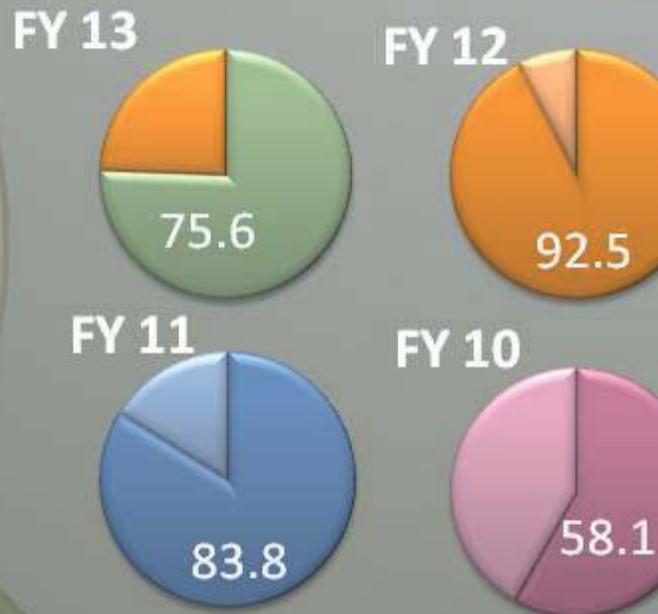
Serving Our Military

Each year, the Charleston District conducts customer satisfaction surveys with our military construction customers. The fiscal year 2013 military construction customer relationship with our customers is one of our top priorities and we strive to support our customers, stakeholders and partners by developing and improving our service to the nation. Take a look at some of the numbers from the survey, as well as

Overall Satisfaction Score



Response Rate



7

customers scored us higher than FY12

5

customers scored us lower than FY12

3 customers scored us a perfect 5.0

Lowest score from our customer was a

3.68

Military Customers

with our customers. Surveys are separated for our civil works customers
instruction was just completed and provided invaluable feedback. Our
be an entrepreneurial, can-do, customer focused district. Our mission is
implementing innovative engineering solutions to improve and strengthen
well as some of the things we will be working on in the next year.

Opportunities to Improve

FY14

2

Flexibility

2

Timeliness

2

Cost

33

survey
questions

These are the number of instances our 31 respondents indicated we could improve in these areas. This feedback will allow us to focus on changing how we handle these categories when completing your work. We will continue with our annual After Action Reviews to look for ways to streamline our processes whenever possible. Feel free to comment throughout the year, not only during these annual surveys by contacting

Lisa.A.Metheney@usace.army.mil.

Getting the last

By: Sean McBride

“Phenomenon.”

That was the word that haunted Joseph Ebai for a year after the 2013 Berkeley County Spelling Bee. The competition was down to just him and one other contestant and he spelled “phenomenon” incorrectly.

“I was stressed out,” says Ebai. “I was really nervous and I got flustered and it threw me off.”

Ebai is now an eighth grader at Cane Bay Middle School. He’s been participating in spelling bees since the third grade, but now has a rhythm that has led to his success.

“I spend about an hour to three hours practicing almost every night,” says Ebai. “You have to learn the etymology of words and their suffixes and prefixes. You also have to learn about definitions because they give you insight on which root words you should be using, the language of origin, and sometimes the spelling patterns.”

Ebai’s family, including his father,

George, who is an economist with the Charleston District’s planning and environmental branch, practices with him by reading words and answering the questions that he would ask during a competition. Sometimes they have trouble pronouncing the words correctly and Ebai has to correct them.

“When we’re practicing, I’ll mix up the words and he’ll catch me,” says George. “We’ll be working on words from one language origin and I’ll randomly throw in a word from a different origin and he’ll point it out.”

So, after vigorous practicing for another year, Ebai was ready for the 2014 Berkeley County Spelling Bee in January where 40 students prepared to get any of the potential 3,000 words that could be used.

“This year, they gave us a lot harder words in the beginning and easier later,” says Ebai. “I said to myself ‘Why are they using the easier words now?’ but I think they wanted to get rid of the other kids quickly and know who was serious about winning.”

Ebai had to spell approximately 15 words in the competition, such as “aphasia,” “mammalian,” and “hoi polloi.” That one was hard because the spelling bee moderator would not say if the word should be spelled as a compound word or two separate words. Turns out he spelled it as one word and the judges gave him credit.

When he’s in his seat waiting his turn, Ebai will practice spelling out, in his head, the words that other competitors are getting and write them on his hand with his finger.

“Sometimes they will get a word that I don’t know so I’m happy that I didn’t get that word,” says Ebai. “Some of it’s luck that if I had gotten one of those words then I would have gotten out.”

When it was down to just two spellers left, Ebai and his competitor went back and forth for several words before the competitor misspelled the word “innate” by leaving out an “n.” The rules

word

of the competition state that if one person gets a word wrong, the remaining speller must spell that same word correctly and then spell one additional word. Ebai spelled it correctly and was then given the word “guitar” for the win.

“I didn’t think there was any other word in a different language that sounds like that, so I paused, but then I spelled it quickly,” says Ebai. “When I won, I felt great and my heart was leaping for joy.”

Ebai’s father couldn’t contain his excitement either.

“I’m proud of him because he works hard and sets very high goals for himself,” said George. “He wants to be a neurosurgeon and is very self-motivated. He’s gifted and has been in the gifted program since third grade. One year, he swept every prize from his school in every subject.”

Now, Ebai will head to the regional Spellbound! spelling bee and face off against competitors in Berkeley, Charleston, Colleton and Dorchester County schools. The first, second and third place finishers from each of these county’s spelling bees advance to this competition. It was here last year where he finished in third overall and beat the girl who had finished ahead of him in the county competition.

“I’m feeling confident, but nervous,” says Ebai. Spellbound! will be held on March 11 at Charleston Southern University. The winner will then advance to the Scripps National Spelling Bee in Washington, D.C., this summer. The entire Charleston District team will be watching and rooting for Ebai to bring home the crown.

**Update- at time of publication, Ebai finished fifth place at Spellbound!*

Opposite page: Joseph Ebai studies his lengthy list of words

Top: Ebai receives his award

Middle: George and Joseph are thrilled with the big win

Bottom: Ebai proudly shows off his awards



Spring Safety



By John Lindsay, Safety Officer

Birds chirping, longer days and Azalea bushes blooming are all signs that spring is right around the corner. With the return of warmer temperatures the opportunity for exploration and being closer to nature is always available, especially in South Carolina. Whether you're relaxing in the backyard, turning up your garden, hitting the pool, or exploring the great outdoors, here are some ways to help keep you and your family healthy and safe this season.

Beware of Bugs

Warmer temperatures don't just attract people; it also attracts mosquitoes, ticks, and fleas. Mosquitoes can transmit West Nile virus, St. Louis encephalitis virus, eastern equine encephalitis virus and even dengue; ticks can transmit Lyme disease and other serious infections; and fleas can transmit plague.

After coming indoors, shower as soon as possible and check your body for ticks. Make sure that your children also bathe and are checked for ticks and wash and tumble dry your clothing. Don't forget your pets; they can bring ticks inside too. If you find an attached tick, don't panic, ticks are easy to remove with a pair of fine-tipped tweezers. Consult a healthcare provider if you develop a rash, fever, body aches, fatigue or headache, stiff neck, and disorientation one to three weeks following a bite.



Tick

Pesticides, vegetation-free play areas, and landscaping techniques for tick-free zones can also help limit your exposure to ticks and other insects.

While you're outside enjoying the weather, remember to protect your pets. Keeping healthy pets will help keep you and your family healthy. Children can get roundworm and hookworm from soil contaminated by pet feces, so make sure that puppies and kittens are seen by a veterinarian to be dewormed. Protect family pets from ticks and fleas by keeping them on a flea and tick control program. Talk to your veterinarian for advice on the appropriate anti-bug products to use on

Palmetto Castle



Copperhead Snake

Coral Snake, Cottonmouth (also known as a "Water Moccasin"), Pigmy Rattlesnake, Eastern Diamondback Rattlesnake, and the Timber Rattlesnake (also known as a "Canebrake"). What's the best defense if you encounter these snakes? Just let them have their space. Remember, snakes do help keep the rodent population down.

Fun in the Sun

Protect yourself and your family from recreational water illnesses by doing your part to keep germs out of the pool. Do not swim when you have diarrhea, don't swallow pool water, take a shower before swimming, and wash your hands after using the toilet or changing diapers. Keeping germs out of the pool means a healthier swimming experience for everyone.

To help prevent skin cancer, avoid being outdoors during the midday when the sun is most intense, use sunscreen with at least SPF 15, cover up with clothing, and wear a brimmed hat and sunglasses that block UVA and UVB rays.

Be aware of the signs of heat exhaustion which include confusion, dizziness, fainting, fatigue, headache, muscle cramps, nausea, pale skin, profuse sweating and rapid heartbeat. If you



your pet.

Snakes

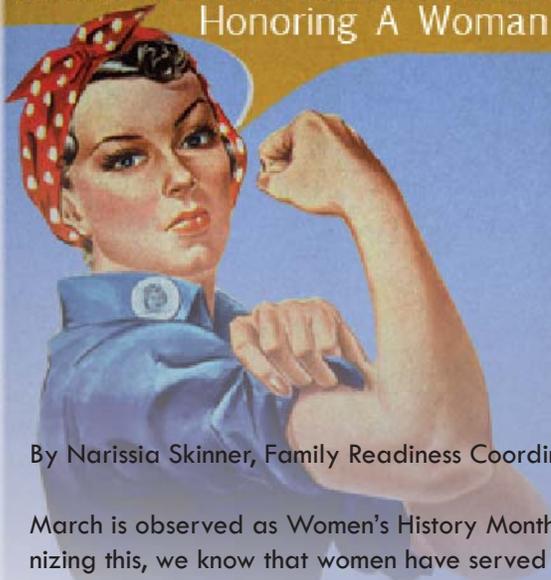
Spring is also the time of year that snakes are out and about. Please be aware that in South Carolina there are six poisonous snakes: Copperhead,

see someone with these symptoms have them rest in a cool, shaded or air-conditioned area and have them drink plenty of water.

Get out and enjoy this weather!

Celebrate National Womens History Month!

Honoring A Woman Deployed



By Narissia Skinner, Family Readiness Coordinator

March is observed as Women's History Month. In recognizing this, we know that women have served many roles throughout history. Women's roles have expanded far beyond the interior space of a home to other countries abroad. To the common titles of wife, mother, daughter, and career professional, add deployed personnel to Cathy Dag's repertoire. Dag is often asked why she deploys. It may be difficult for some to understand her reason, but for Dag it's a feeling of "I gotta do it." The financial stability is rewarding for both her and her son's future, but that's not why she serves. She made the conscious choice to deploy because she wants to be able to help those that are doing the jobs in Afghanistan that will make the country safe and peaceful for the Afghans.

Her job does not require her to go outside the wire, therefore, she does not have firsthand knowledge of exactly what it's like or what goes on outside. Dag schedules the movements for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers personnel that must go out and do the daunting task of rebuilding the country. She coordinates the movement of people in and out of the country as well as throughout the region. Since her arrival, things have been seamless, and everyone has made movement as they so desire or as their travel orders

dictate. She stays extremely busy working long hours, which is beneficial because it lessens the time for her to get bored or to miss home. Dag is one of four admin support specialists who support more than USACE 200 employees working throughout the region to ensure that they are exactly where they should be when they should be.

Dag has served on a few deployment assignments. On each of her assignments, she has enjoyed working with the people that she has been surrounded by. Unlike in normal everyday life where you work for eight hours and then go your separate ways, in Afghanistan, everyone does everything together; work, eat, sleep, share holidays, and even play in the snow together. Being deployed has gained Dag lasting friendships across the globe.

Being a wife, mother and daughter, deployment was very difficult at first. Dag admits that she cried for two days straight. But once she gathered herself and began to focus on her purpose and her reason for being there, things became easy. The friends that she gained since her arrival have been a great solace for her. An added bonus is the fact that she gets to see her baby everyday online. Every time she sees her son, he's learned something new. It makes her feel as if she's home right there with them, which makes her that much happier. Her son loves to dance, so every night Dag plays music before they end their conversation, and he and she will dance until he's tired.

Some people count down the days, but Dag prefers to count the months because "12 sounds so much better than 365." Not only for Women's History month, but for all 12 months that Dag likes to focus on, we honor and salute her and her service and dedication to her family, her country, USACE, and the mission abroad.



Palmetto Happenings

Big on Small Business

Charleston District is big on small business, especially small businesses that hire people with significant disabilities to find employment. Because of this, the District makes a big effort to award contracts through the AbilityOne program. AbilityOne helps anyone who is blind or living with disabilities, such as the Wounded Warriors, by providing employment opportunities in the manufacturing and delivery of products and services to the federal government.

Not only was Charleston District the only district in the South Atlantic Division to award contracts through AbilityOne, but they managed to award \$4.3 million in contracts through the program. This achievement did not go unnoticed when Lt. Gen. Thomas Bostick, USACE Chief of Engineers, presented Lt. Col. John Litz, Charleston District commander, with an award in recognition of this achievement at a recent Society of American Military Engineers Small Business Conference.



Educating the Kiwanis Club

Ann Eaddy, biologist, recently presented an "Introduction to the Regulatory Program" to the Florence Kiwanis Club on December 5th. The presentation discussed the Corps' regulatory authority and jurisdiction as well as the permitting process. Wiley Bracey, a co-worker, was also in attendance and assisted by presenting updates on local projects and answering questions from the audience. Attendees were particularly interested about local road projects stemming from the Florence County penny sales tax, the Carolina Bays Parkway and the Charleston Harbor Post 45 Study.

"We enjoyed talking about the Corps' regulatory program," said Eaddy. "The attendees had great questions, and cared about what the Corps was doing in their area."

If you are interested in having a speaker address your group about any of our projects, please email CESAC-PAO@usace.army.mil.





Keeping Sen. Graham informed

To keep Sen. Lindsay Graham informed about various Charleston District projects, Lt. Col. John Litz had the pleasure of meeting with him twice in just one month. The first gathering was to provide an update about the Charleston Harbor Post 45 Project with Jim Newsome, President and CEO of South Carolina State Ports Authority. Graham provided information on a bill, Water Resources Development Act of 2013, which is currently being proposed. Not only was this meeting very productive, it garnered several positive media articles.

Later in the month, Litz met with Mayor of North Myrtle Beach, Marilyn Hatley, and Graham to discuss a potential project in Cherry Grove. While the project hasn't come to fruition yet, it was considered to be an optimistic meeting. The group also visited North Myrtle Beach's storm water ocean outfall project.

We were happy to brief Graham on the Corps' projects and capabilities and will provide updates again in April when the Corps has their semi-annual congressional visit.

Congratulations to.....

Bob Perry, SC Department of Natural Resources Director Of Environment Programs, was awarded the Conservationist of the Year by the South Carolina Wildlife Federation for his continued dedication to maintaining and managing coastal wetlands as well as for working with Haile Gold Mine and the Corps to develop a mitigation plan that will reduce environmental impact.

The South Carolina Wildlife Federation promotes effective habitat conservation and respect for outdoor traditions through statewide leadership, education, advocacy and partnerships.

Congratulations, Bob!



Barbara Melvin, SC Ports Authority Senior Vice President of External Affairs, has been selected as the 2014 Woman of the Year by Charleston Women in International Trade. Melvin will be recognized at the organization's annual soiree on April 8 for her leadership at the Port and her positive contributions to the maritime and international trade communities.

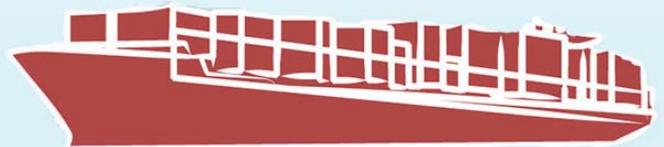
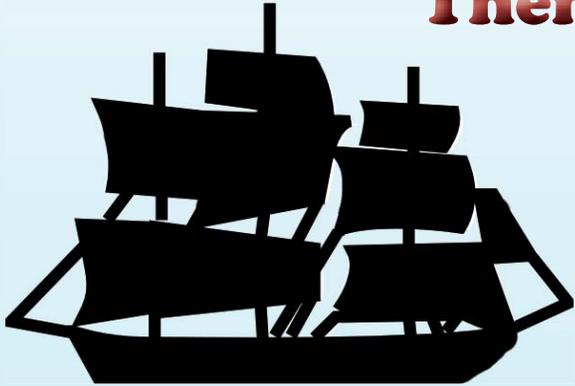
The Charleston Women in International Trade is a local organization that strives to enhance the status and interests of women in the field of international trade through networking, disseminating and publishing information, and providing educational programs in both the private and public sectors.

Congratulations on this tremendous honor, Barbara!

Charleston Harbor Deepening Project Costs

The Charleston District has been maintaining Charleston Harbor since 1851. Since then, several harbor deepenings have occurred to meet the needs of the ever-changing shipping industry. The District is currently in the feasibility phase for another harbor deepening project, known as Post 45. The study is looking at determining a recommendation to what depth Charleston Harbor should be deepened to beyond the currently federally authorized 45 foot depth. Below is a look at different projects that have been done in the harbor over the years and the cost that was associated with them originally versus the cost when taking inflation into consideration. The District will have the draft environmental impact study ready for the public in late summer or early fall.

Then and Now



<u>Original Cost</u>	<u>Project</u>	<u>2013 Inflated Cost</u>
\$4,037,756.70	1878 and 1888 Deepening	\$98,469,675.15
\$636,749.86	1899 Project	\$17,687,469.11
\$410,765.34	1910 Authorized Channel	\$10,019,154.63
\$5,084,771.90	Total	\$126,176,298.89